

Children's Mercy Kansas City

## SHARE @ Children's Mercy

---

Posters

---

2020

### Medicine and Culture Abroad: Lago de Atitlan, Guatemala

Micah Helton

*Children's Mercy Hospital*

Let us know how access to this publication benefits you

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlyexchange.childrensmercy.org/posters>



Part of the [Medical Education Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Helton, Micah, "Medicine and Culture Abroad: Lago de Atitlan, Guatemala" (2020). *Posters*. 150.  
<https://scholarlyexchange.childrensmercy.org/posters/150>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by SHARE @ Children's Mercy. It has been accepted for inclusion in Posters by an authorized administrator of SHARE @ Children's Mercy. For more information, please contact [hlsteel@cmh.edu](mailto:hlsteel@cmh.edu).

# Medicine and Culture Abroad : Lago de Atitlán, Guatemala

Micah Helton, MD July 2019

Children's Mercy Kansas City, Kansas City, Mo.

## Background

- I chose a Global Health month in Guatemala with the goal of seeing medicine in a developing country, participating in a culture different than my own, and furthering my Spanish for future medical practice.

## Objective

- Learn from local nurses, doctors, and traditional healers
- Improve communication in Spanish
- Experience local customs and culture
- Connect with patients of all ages in a novel setting

## Preparation

- Engaged in Global Health lectures and simulations in preparation for culture shock and cultural humility.
- Reviewed resources from host physician about common ailments and the health care system in Guatemala
- Researched the history of devastating civil war and current political climate in view of an imminent election



## Experience

- Worked alongside a Guatemalan General Practice physician to treat indigenous Mayan patients of all ages.
- Treated patients from birth to end-of-life with a broad range of conditions.
- Met with a local midwife, teachers, doctors, and nurses to learn about traditional and locally-practiced modern medicine.
- Attended Spanish class and lived with host family.

## Reflection

- Understanding the political, cultural, and ideological background of patients is key in successfully treating medical problems.
- Mosquito borne illness and childhood malnutrition are common. Mortality rate before age 5 is high: 28 in 1,000 births.

## Future Directions

- Acknowledging different cultural and personal backgrounds for effective communication in my own practice moving forward
- Continue to learn and practice Spanish